

his core, but also one of the most compassionate individuals you could imagine.

To lose Harry Reid is like losing track of the North Star. There are many in this Chamber who got to where they are because of him.

Next Wednesday, January 12, Harry will make his final return to the U.S. Capitol, where he will lie in state under the Rotunda. As we honor his life and legacy, I will have more to say in the coming days. But for now, I can only say that Harry was my leader, my mentor, and one of my dearest friends.

When you lose someone who is as close to us as Harry was, they are never truly gone. They will always stay with us. As we gavel in today, I take comfort knowing that Harry is with us in spirit, walking alongside us as we continue the work he dedicated himself to for so many years.

To Harry's family, to his wife Landra, to all the children and grandchildren, I offer my prayers and my condolences.

#### BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Now, Mr. President, the Senate gavels in on this icy January morning to mark the beginning of a new year, and there is much we must accomplish. At the start of 2020, few could have foreseen the awful trials our country has endured over the past 2 years.

But, against adversity, the American people responded. Last year, over 200 million Americans got vaccinated against COVID, 6 million jobs were added back to the economy, and Congress delivered on historic legislation that gave Americans a much needed lifeline to get through the worst of COVID.

In a 50-50 Senate, we passed the first stand-alone infrastructure bill in decades, passed historic funding for the sciences and tech innovation, and confirmed the most judicial nominees in a President's first year since Ronald Reagan.

Despite the immense challenges before us, we now begin 2022 better off compared to where we were 1 year ago. But, of course, there is much, much still left to do. So let us continue.

To begin this week, the Senate will vote to confirm Gabriel Sanchez as U.S. circuit court judge for the Ninth Circuit. A graduate of Yale, a Fulbright scholar, and a current associate justice of the California Court of Appeals, Justice Sanchez has presided in hundreds of cases and has the experience and expertise necessary to be an excellent addition to the Federal bench.

Off the floor, the negotiations will continue with Members of our caucus and with the White House on finding a path forward on Build Back Better. As I mentioned before Christmas, I intend to hold a vote in the Senate on BBB, and we will keep voting until we get a bill passed. The stakes are high for us to find common ground on this legislation. The climate crisis continues to worsen. Families and children continue

dealing with the impacts of COVID, and too many Americans still struggle to pay the high cost of healthcare and prescription drugs. We will keep working until we get something done.

#### VOTING RIGHTS

Mr. President, now, about January 6 and defending democracy, at the same time the Senate will also proceed on another urgent and fundamental matter: protecting our democracy and strengthening the right to vote in free and fair elections.

Later today, I will meet with a number of my colleagues to continue our conversation on voting rights, and I will meet with our entire caucus for the first time this year to talk about how we are going to move forward. There has been constant discussion among Members over the break—constant. I must have made a minimum of 10 phone calls every day, with maybe the exception of Christmas, in respect for my colleagues. But we have to keep moving forward.

And, a few days from now, our country will observe a dark and troubling milestone: the 1-year anniversary of January 6, the day that thousands of rioters, urged on by the vicious lies of the disgraced former President, waged a violent assault upon the U.S. Capitol in order to prevent a peaceful transfer of power.

This was no just peaceful demonstration; this was aimed at undoing our democracy. Thank God they failed.

As I said hours after the attack, January 6, 2021, will be forever remembered as a day of enduring infamy, a permanent blemish in the story of American democracy, and the final, bitter act of the worst President—the worst President—in modern times.

Of course, over the course of this week, we will pay tribute to the heroes who stepped up that fateful day: our Capitol Police, the DC Metro Police, our National Guard who kept watch for months, and everyone who acted quickly that day to save the lives and save our democracy. But this week—this week—we must also acknowledge that the attack on January 6 was not a one-off. It did not materialize out of the blue. On the contrary, January 6 was a symptom of a much broader illness that has now infected the modern Republican Party: an effort to delegitimize our elections, rooted in Donald Trump's Big Lie.

While January 6 was only 1 day, the Big Lie lives on and has only grown stronger. The Big Lie lives on in Republican-dominated State legislatures, where at least 19 States have passed 33 new laws that will potentially make it harder—harder—for millions to vote in our elections. They say they want to prevent fraud, and they have no evidence of fraud. We all know what they are up to: vitiating, poisoning our elections, this sacred part of American democracy.

And the violence and threats of violence continue. The Big Lie lives on through the troubling wave of violent

threats that election workers across the country have endured over the course of the last year, all simply for the audacity of having done their job to count the votes fairly and without bias.

If left alone—if left alone—the Big Lie threatens the very future of our Republic. If people don't believe in the sanctity of our elections, what is going to happen to this Republic? The sanctity of elections, the fairness of elections, the fact that after election day we abide by the results has been the cornerstone of our entire democracy. It is what democracy is all about. It is what the Founding Fathers constructed. Are we going to let that go by the wayside? Are we going to let it be poisoned and vitiated, with huge consequences to the effect of this Nation, probably greater than any we have seen since the Civil War?

So, as we remember January 6 this week and as we confront State-level voter suppression, we must be clear that they are not isolated developments; they are all directly linked to the same anti-democratic poison of the Big Lie.

Let me say that one more time. The insurrection of January 6, the flurry of new voter restriction laws, and the State-level efforts to subvert democracy are not isolated developments but manifestations of the same anti-democratic poison of Donald Trump's Big Lie, and they all demand the same solution: The Senate must advance legislation to protect our democracy and safeguard the right to vote.

Over the coming weeks, the Senate will thus consider legislation we can pass to achieve this goal. Democrats for months have tried to bring Republicans to the table, but every single time, Republicans use the rules of the Senate to prevent even a debate.

Voting rights in the past was a bipartisan issue. How quickly they forget. Republican Presidents—Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, George W. Bush—supported voting rights.

When voting rights extensions came up in this body in the past, they passed by large majorities—bipartisan. The resistance we see from modern-day Republicans is a beast of an entirely different nature. Maybe some of them were scared of Trump. But too many of them see this as a way to win advantage, to get their hard-right views enacted, even though the public doesn't support them, by jaundicing our election process and putting barriers in the way of particular people—not all people—of voting: people of color, poor people, people who live in big cities, young people, handicapped people, elderly people.

As I said in my "Dear Colleague" earlier this week, if Republicans continue to hijack the rules of the Chamber to prevent action on something as critical as protecting our democracy, then the Senate will debate and consider changes to the rules on or before January 17, Martin Luther King Jr. Day.